

**REPORT TO THE MAYOR
OF THE CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS
BY THE
ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL TASK FORCE**

INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Gandhi is credited with this succinct statement: *"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."* The City of Indianapolis (City) is a progressive metropolitan area with a national reputation for embracing change and aggressively pursuing projects that improve the quality of life for its citizenry. It is time now for leaders and residents alike to address companion animal overpopulation and its consequences and decide how to effectively resolve the issue. Companion animal overpopulation and its consequences can be viewed from an economic and emotional perspective. To effect change and reach resolution, focused and sustained action is necessary.

This report factually and analytically presents the issues facing our community and the animals with whom we share it, and makes substantive recommendations for consideration by City leadership and the citizenry. It is based on the Task Force members' individual and collective due diligence, interviews, personal experience, observations, consultation with national experts on the subject of animal care and control, independent research and comment from the public.

It has been our privilege to serve the City.

OVERVIEW

As a general population, we must first acknowledge the following: The City has a pet overpopulation problem. It is exacerbated by lack of a take-charge approach to introduce and implement needed changes in philosophy and actions to thwart the problem. Animal overpopulation and the problems associated with it (unwanted animals, euthanasia, etc.) are not unique to Indianapolis. Cities such as Austin^{1/}, Las Vegas, Orlando, Boston,

^{1/} *City and County government has taken the lead in Austin where the City Council and County Commissioners passed resolutions in December 1997 making it the official goal of the City and County to end the killing of adoptable animals at the City's animal control facility. The City's animal services staff and management worked in conjunction with Austin Pets Alive!, the Austin Humane Society, Animal Trustees of Austin, and other animal welfare groups in the City and County to develop a plan to achieve the City's and County's official goal to make Austin a "no-kill" city within 5 years. That collaboration resulted in the drafting and adoption of Austin's "Comprehensive Plan For A No-Kill Millennium."* (See **Attachment A** to the Report). <http://www.geocities.com/~austinpetsaliv/> *The effort resulted in the donation of \$5 million from Maddie's Fund, a \$200 million foundation dedicated to animal welfare. (A copy of Maddie's Fund's 2000-2001 Annual Report is provided as **Attachment B** to the Report.)* www.maddiesfund.org

Charlotte, Phoenix, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Denver, Dallas, Honolulu, and others, as well as Marin County, California, and the states of New Hampshire and New Jersey, faced with similar problems, developed effective methodologies to resolve those problems. Given the current situation, we must decide:

- Whether there exists effective leadership in the community to challenge and deal with the problem of pet overpopulation and its consequences.
- Whether there is effective community organization and program coordination, e.g., coordination between Animal Care and Control (ACC), the Humane Society of Indianapolis (HSI), private shelters, breed rescue groups and the veterinary community.
- Whether there is proper data collection, and whether the data collected has been used to strategically plan and coordinate a course of action.
- Whether there is or should be a comprehensive community spay/neuter program(s).
- Whether there are adequate and effective shelter adoption programs.
- Whether sick and injured animals receive appropriate veterinary care while at ACC.
- Whether there are educational and promotional programs that adequately define the overpopulation problem, prioritize resources, and initiate solutions that change behaviors.
- Whether there are accountability standards and plans that monitor results of those charged by the City with the responsibility for the care and control of animals.
- Whether adequate resources of all types are devoted to animal care and control in the community.
- Whether adequate laws are in place to outline appropriate behaviors by pet owners.

- Whether the community as a whole supports the challenge of responsible pet ownership.^{2/}
- Whether adequate public outreach exists to help correct irresponsible pet ownership, such as those who allow pets to produce unwanted litters, those who allow their pets to roam, and those who treat their pets inhumanely.

The Task Force's Report addresses the above issues in the following sections of its Report:

- (I) Spay/Neuter
- (II) Euthanasia
- (III) Veterinary Care
- (IV) Adoptions
- (V) Facilities
- (VI) Public Education
- (VII) Data Collection/Retention
- (VIII) Licensing
- (IX) Ordinances
- (X) ACC operations (including Administrator, Operations Manager, Shelter Manager, Front Office Manager, Volunteer Coordinator)
- (XI) Contract Between The Humane Society of Indianapolis and The City/ACC
- (XII) Separating Animal Care Function From Animal Control Function
- (XIII) Funding
- (XIV) Programs In Other Cities

I. SPAY/NEUTER

Spaying and neutering companion animals is a critical, if not *the* critical component, to address animal overpopulation. The Task Force believes it is essential that the City, as well as other organizations that deal with the care and control of animals, support an aggressive spay/neuter program.

New York City animal control statistics provide an excellent illustration of how change can occur. For decades, no United States city more vigorously exterminated stray dogs and cats, yet the number killed rose every year, peaking

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*The Task Force prepared a detailed questionnaire that addressed numerous issues involving animal care and control in the City. That questionnaire was distributed at the Task Force's December 2001 public meeting attended by more than 100 individuals. The questionnaire and results from the questionnaire are attached to the Report as **Attachment C**.*

at 250,000 in 1962 and remaining at that level until 1967. At about that time, a number of organizations began performing high-volume sterilization surgery in and around the City. From 1967 through 1995, the number of "strays" euthanized dropped every year, hitting a low of 40,000. Since then, the New York City ratio of animals killed to human population has been reduced to the second lowest in the nation, at about 5.8 per 1,000 people.

The Task Force recommends:

- Implementation of a City ordinance requiring that all animals adopted from the ACC facility be spayed/neutered prior to placement into a new home.^{3/}
- Aggressive promotion by the City and ACC of the need for spay/neuter.
- Increasing the availability of low-cost spay/neuter surgery with low cost spay/neuter clinics, including potential government subsidies.
- City and community participation in spay/neuter events.
- Developing and supporting programs in collaboration with the local veterinary community and low-cost spay/neuter clinics for funding to increase the number of spay/neuters per year.
- Instituting differential license fees that favor spayed/neutered dogs and cats.
- Reviewing the State of New Jersey model — a successful cooperative effort between government, veterinarians and health departments. In New Jersey, a certain percentage of money obtained from a companion animal license fee is placed in a spay/neuter fund, and veterinarians throughout the State are then paid to perform spay/neuters. *As a result, New Jersey's euthanasia rate is now only 2 percent per year.*
- The City and veterinary community follow the example of numerous cities in offering spay/neuter programs/services to low and moderate income residents.^{4/}

^{3/}

Robert Christiansen, a nationally known expert on animal care and control, stated at the Task Force's January 30, 2002, public hearing that at least 20% of the animals who leave a shelter unaltered will mate and reproduce.

- Finalizing and implementing the Central Indiana Veterinarian Medical Association (CIVMA) program with local veterinarians.
- Continued implementation by ACC of spaying or neutering all animals adopted from the facility by a veterinarian or low-cost spay/neuter clinic before owner pickup.
- ACC support of veterinarians who are willing to perform spay/neuters for a discounted fee.
- Developing educational and promotional programs that educate the public about the benefits of spay/neuter and its proven record of reducing animal overpopulation, the health benefits derived from spay/neuter and the improved behavior of neutered animals.
- Investigating the feasibility of the City purchasing a "mobile" spay/neuter van. The organization Animal Matters, located in Westbrook, Connecticut, purchased a mobile spay/neuter van and performed 8,200 spay/neuters and vaccinations in 1997.^{5/}

II. EUTHANASIA

Indianapolis' euthanasia rate is equal to or higher than other comparably sized cities. Indianapolis ranks in the lower tier of cities in euthanasia rates, according

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In fact, volunteers from the FACE low cost spay/neuter clinic reported at the Task Force's January 30, 2002, public hearing that they had focused on an area in Indianapolis consisting of 18 zip codes and have provided approximately 3,000 free spay/neuter coupons to individuals in those areas. The reported results have been very positive.

FACE has done approximately 29,000 spay/neuters since it opened March 8, 1999.

^{5/}

Cities that have purchased mobile spay/neuter vans and used them with regular success, include but are not limited to, Boston, New York (2), Houston, Raleigh, Austin, San Diego, Reno, Los Angeles, West Palm Beach, Phoenix, Baltimore, San Antonio, Sonoma, Santa Fe, Grand Rapids, Buffalo and Allentown, Pennsylvania.

In Houston, San Diego and other cities, city government utilizes their mobile spay/neuter vans and sends them into low to moderate income communities, providing free spay/neuter services and vaccinations.

to one nationally known animal welfare expert.^{6/} Nationally, 17 animals are euthanized for every 1,000 residents. In 2000, Indianapolis euthanized 27 animals per 1,000, and in 2001, euthanized 23 per 1,000.

The euthanasia rate in Indianapolis is unacceptable. In 2000, ACC euthanized approximately 70% of animals brought to the facility. Therefore, in 2000, only 3 of every 10 animals who came to the shelter left alive.^{7/} Currently, approximately two-thirds of the animals received at the ACC facility are euthanized. Scores of perfectly healthy and adoptable animals have been and continue to be euthanized at ACC even though sufficient kennel space exists at the ACC facility. This violates the City Code, is unacceptable, and *must* cease. The City Code states:

... No owner-surrendered animal shall be humanely disposed of, while there is sufficient room in the kennel to reasonably house such animal at the Animal Care and Control shelter.

Revised Code § 531-731(a).

... Even after the expiration of the 6-day impoundment, no animal shall be humanely disposed of, while there is sufficient room in the kennel to reasonably house such animal at the Animal Care and Control shelter.

Revised Code § 531-731(b).

Examination of a portion of the euthanasia cards at the ACC facility during the week of January 29, 2002, revealed the following reasons for euthanasia: (1) "too young," (2) "age," (3) "runny nose" (6-month Labrador mix), (4) "ringworm" (very common in dogs and cats), (5) "sneezing" (a kitten), (6) health (very common for adults, puppies and kittens), (7) "scared" (4-month kitten), (8) "age" (beagle), (9) "heartworm," and (10) "injured."

^{6/} These statistics were presented by Robert Christiansen at the Task Force's January 30, 2002, public meeting.

^{7/} The euthanasia and adoption rates for ACC and for ACC and HSI combined over the past five years have remained stagnant. See **Attachment D** and **Attachment E** to the Report. **Attachment D** represents the five year euthanasia and adoption rates for ACC only. **Attachment E** represents the five year combined euthanasia and adoption rates for ACC and HSI.

On other euthanasia cards, owners purportedly wanted their dogs euthanized because (a) "*wife no longer wanted a pet*," (b) "*owner was moving to an apartment*," and (c) "*the female owner had a baby*."

In New Hampshire, State officials discovered that there is a correlation between a proactive and aggressive spay/neuter program, animal companion licensure and reduced euthanasia rates. New Hampshire, like New Jersey, allocated a percentage of mandatory licensing fees to create a spay/neuter fund from which veterinarians could draw to perform spay/neuters. Not only did the licensing fees provide money to the spay/neuter fund, they also increased the percentage of animals returned to their owners (therefore less animals entering shelters and being euthanized). The proactive spay/neuter and licensure program which was instituted in 1993, reduced New Hampshire's euthanasia rate from 8,065 cats and dogs in 1992 to 3,775 cats and dogs in 1998 — for the entire State. That level had been even more significantly reduced as of 2001. (See **Attachment F** to the Report^{8/}).

The Task Force recommends an in-depth review of:

- The criteria currently used to define what constitutes an "adoptable" animal and the criteria for euthanasia. It is clear that animals who could have been treated with an inexpensive but efficacious antibiotic to remedy a medical condition instead were and are being euthanized. Moreover, there is significant evidence that shows older animals, *i.e.*, five years or above, are not considered "adoptable," and that these animals are being routinely euthanized. These animals are adoptable and should not be euthanized.
- Euthanasia records for each animal. ACC must be required to keep detailed records that set forth with specificity the reason an animal is euthanized.
- The correlation between euthanasia and reduced staffing levels, *i.e.*, whether animals are euthanized because there is not enough staff to clean cages or perform other duties at the ACC facility.
- Training procedures for staff regarding "criteria" for euthanasia.

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Attachment F, which is a graph/chart about New Hampshire's euthanasia rate, can be read as follows: The shaded green portion of the graph represents cats euthanized and the shaded red portion represents dogs euthanized. The vertical axis represents the number of dogs impounded.

- The ACC facility layout to assure that it provides for appropriate separation of sick from healthy animals.
- Euthanasia procedures for ACC officers. All ACC officers must be trained in such procedures for emergency situations to prevent undue suffering by an animal found in the course of the ACC officer's duties.

III. VETERINARY CARE

As reported at the December 2001, Task Force public hearing, a veterinarian from HSI spends only two hours *per week* at the ACC facility.^{9/} The Task Force believes that the time spent at the ACC facility by the veterinarian is extremely inadequate and that the current level and quality of veterinary care must be closely examined. There is both substantial and substantiated evidence that animals in need of veterinary care at ACC have been refused such care. Moreover, there is a valid question about whether the current veterinary care received by the animals at ACC even complies with the City Ordinance, which states:

The shelter shall contract or arrange for licensed regular veterinary care and for the appropriate veterinary medical supplies for the animals at the facility, which veterinary care shall include, but not be limited to: treatment of sick and injured animals, care for newborn or young animals, administration of preventative vaccines and worming.

Revised Code § 251-322(h).

- The Task Force has asked for but has not received information about what percentage of animals in need of veterinary care actually are sent for care to an off-site veterinarian with whom ACC has a contract.
- To improve accountability, the Task Force believes that ACC must begin keeping detailed records that identify each animal at the facility, its medical condition, veterinary care required and given, the individual providing the veterinary care and the medications given to the animal.
- The Task Force believes that ACC must consider hiring a part-time or full-time veterinarian and/or registered veterinary technician who would practice at the ACC facility on a *daily* basis. This decision can be aided

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It is the Task Force's understanding that there has been a recent change in the veterinary arrangement and that a "volunteer" veterinarian now spends two hours per week at the ACC facility.

by reviewing the historical medical needs of the animals at the facility and ascertaining satisfactory options for providing required medical care. The presence of a veterinary professional at the facility would ensure that the animals are being proactively examined, assessed and treated.

- The Task Force has both serious and substantiated concerns that adoptable animals with treatable conditions, e.g., upper respiratory infection, are being needlessly euthanized. Animals with that and other conditions could routinely and effectively be treated if adequate veterinary care were available.
- The Task Force believes that detailed records must be maintained concerning emergency veterinarian care. There appears to be no consistent protocol for emergency veterinary care, *i.e.*, when an animal is deemed to be in need of emergency care, what percentage receive emergency care, and by whom. If such a protocol does exist, it is not being followed.
- The Task Force believes that ACC must determine if it consistently maintains a sufficient and adequate supply of medicines, sedatives, antibiotics, and standard medications required and necessary for the treatment of all animals as required by Revised Code § 251-322(h).
- The Task Force believes that ACC should, to assist with regular veterinary care, explore the possibility of veterinary externships and veterinary technician externships with Purdue University and other institutions.
- On-site veterinary care would allow ACC to purchase sedatives — a controlled substance — and in those instances where necessary, administer sedatives, to alleviate unnecessary suffering by animals during euthanasia.

IV. ADOPTIONS

The Task Force finds that the number of adoptions and adoption rates at ACC must be increased. Statistics for the past two years show that approximately forty percent (40%) of ACC adoptions through humane transfers are due to one organization alone — Southside Animal Shelter. The Task Force believes that a formal adoption program — not simply an "adoption process" (e.g., filling out a form and paying an adoption fee) — *must* be developed at ACC. Moreover, there

must be an accountability standard by which to track and verify the number and quality of adoptions at ACC.^{10/}

One of the most challenging aspects of addressing pet overpopulation comes with reaching and effecting change in people who have had no contact with animal shelters. According to one national survey, thirteen percent of dogs and twelve percent of cats are obtained from shelters — an alarmingly small percentage.^{11/}

The Task Force recommends that:

- ACC become much more aggressive in promoting the adoption of shelter animals. First, ACC must become more knowledgeable about the dynamics that go into a decision to obtain an animal and create strategies to assist prospective adoptive owners. For instance, people want healthy animals, so ACC should provide all relevant and known information about the health of the animal. Prospective owners should know what services ACC provides, e.g., temperament testing, vaccinations, and/or spay/neuter. This information should be made available *before* the prospective owner visits the facility.
- ACC develop significantly better relations with other shelters and rescue groups.
- ACC use advertising effectively. People do not know what ACC has to offer until ACC tells them. In the shelter business, time does not mean money — *it means life*.
- ACC elevate the status and attractiveness of shelter animals. Groom the animals and improve the look of the shelter with bright colors^{12/}, and initiate a program with the "Veterinary Assisting" class of Everett Light Center of Washington Township. This class presently consists of 31 students who have expressed an interest in a career in the veterinary field, e.g. veterinarian, veterinary technician or groomer. These students could assist with bathing and grooming animals at ACC.

^{10/} *National statistics show that the average adoption rate at shelters is approximately 15 percent of all pet acquisitions in the community. ACC's adoption rate is 8 percent.*

^{11/} *Humane Society of the United States on Pet Ownership Shelter Release 1993.*

^{12/} *Quick Solutions, Inc., a paint company in Baltimore, Maryland specializes in paints for animal shelters. (A sample color chart is provided as **Attachment G**).*

- ACC review its definitions and criteria currently in use for what constitutes an "adoptable" animal, including age considerations, medical conditions and breed restrictions.^{13/}
- ACC develop a plan for "off-site" adoptions (e.g., Glendale Mall).
- The City improve the signage and the grounds at the ACC facility to make the grounds more inviting to prospective adoptive owners.
- ACC and the City consider and implement recommendations made by the public at the December 2001, Task Force public meeting and by HSI volunteers that animals be provided with a chew toy that will lessen boredom while the animal is confined in the kennel all day.
- ACC feature "older" dogs and cats. Testimonials of adoptive owners should be made available.
- ACC should also employ techniques similar to those used by the North Shore Animal League in Port Washington, New York, that include displays, ads, fliers, and yellow page ads.
- The City create a website for adoption of animals.
- The City create a comprehensive website that describes ACC, what ACC does, available services and where it is located.
- ACC and the City improve the lobby space at the ACC facility to make it more inviting to prospective adoptive owners.
- ACC offer behavioral courses to prospective adoptive owners.
- ACC should explore ways to "showcase" the animals to prospective adoptive owners (utilizing the "Pet-Of-The-Week" concept where animals are shown in local newspapers or "showcase" animals during viewable times on television as "Pets-Of-The-Week").

V. **FACILITIES**

The ACC facility was built in 1981. It is located in an industrial area of the City next to the Indianapolis Waste Treatment Plant. The facility is not well identified

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Animals at ACC can be and are euthanized simply because of an upper respiratory infection which can be treated with the cheap but efficacious antibiotic, Amoxicillin.

(i.e., lack of prominent signage) and can be difficult to find. Many people complain that ACC is not adequately listed in the telephone directory, and, frequently, calls are not answered. Unanswered calls are redirected to the Mayor's Action Center "hotline" where the caller receives a recorded message that is not related to ACC or the ACC facility.^{14/} It is critical to realize that individuals who are willing to adopt an animal and/or locate their lost animal are customers of ACC. The City must do what is fiscally responsible to attract those customers including providing them services. The more individuals who can be drawn to the facility, the more adoptions, the more lost animals reunited with owners and subsequently significantly fewer animals are euthanized.

The Task Force believes:

- There must be an outdoor/fenced-in exercise area. This fenced-in area can also be used for potential adoptive owners to better interact with the animals. Fresh air and exercise – like humans – are critical to an animal's quality of life and care.
- ACC must provide separate areas for sick and injured animals.
- Serious consideration should be given to reviewing the current layout of the facility from a consumer perspective as well as from animal care and control requirements.
- The City and ACC should consider grounds/landscaping improvements to create a more inviting look to attract potential adoptive owners.
- The City should erect adequate signage that clearly identifies the ACC facility.
- ACC should finalize implementation of a pet shop in the lobby as an attraction to prospective adoptive owners and as a source of revenue.
- Better use of the lobby space would make the facility and atmosphere more inviting to prospective adoptive owners.
- ACC *must* supply bedding for the animals.
- ACC should install/purchase commercial grade washers and dryers adequate to handle washing and drying of all bedding. It is the Task

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On April 6, 2001, a letter was sent to the City by the Animal Care and Control Board about the fact that calls to ACC frequently are not answered and that calls oftentimes automatically revert to the Mayor's Action Center "hotline."

Force's understanding that an individual and/or company offered to provide this to ACC at no charge.

- ACC should purchase light bulbs that produce natural UV lighting. Such lighting provides a normal seasonal perspective for animals.
- ACC should explore the possibility and cost parameters of changing acoustics at the facility by installing noise-reducing ceiling panels.
- ACC should obtain and use appropriate shelter management software and explore the cost and feasibility of additional computer equipment to make recordkeeping, data collection and other tasks more centralized and efficient.

VI. PUBLIC EDUCATION

The main factors that cause dogs to end up in shelters and in many cases lead to their premature deaths are (1) failure to train and integrate the dog into the home, (2) lack of identification to enable reuniting lost dogs with owners, (3) failure to spay/neuter, and (4) prejudice against dogs one year or older. Euthanasia rates of pets in shelters will decrease when educational programs reach owners before they obtain a pet and during the critical first year of ownership.

The City and ACC should take aggressive action to educate the public about the enormity of the "surplus" pet problem. The public must be made to feel, as well as understand, the need for change from the status quo. Effective results demand not only a change of heart, but a change in peoples' behavior. Owning a pet is a lifetime commitment to the pet. That commitment includes feeding, housing, training and providing veterinary care. The commitment should not be entered into lightly. Unfortunately, many adolescent and adult dogs in shelters are victims of people who do not understand the responsibilities, duties and reality of pet ownership. It needs to be recognized that we all have a role in a common battle — not against an "animal problem," but against a "people problem." *There is no such thing as a bad dog, only uninformed owners.*

Many pet owners do not consider the consequences of casual indifference to spay/neuter. They do not realize that they subject a portion of their dog's "accidental" puppy litter to death. They try to place the puppies, but only have luck in placing a few. They then take them to the shelter.^{15/} One animal or one litter brought to a shelter by one person does not seem like an insurmountable

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National statistics show that 75 percent of individuals who relinquish their animals to a shelter do so with the expectation that the animals will be adopted.

problem.^{16/} What they do not realize is that 10, 20 or 50 people bring animals into an already crowded shelter everyday. Space is precious. As a result, animals die.^{17/}

The Task Force recommends that:

- First-time owners be encouraged to attend a pet-owner orientation seminar that could include an educational video about pet ownership and care.
- ACC use pre-adoption counseling to assist prospective owners with appropriate pet selections and to follow-up with clients to offer assistance with any problems.^{18/}
- ACC suggest resources for prospective owners, such as books.
- The City and ACC develop a humane education program that emphasizes and educates the community about the dynamics of pet overpopulation.
- The City and ACC establish community intervention programs to reach new pet owners who do not initially seek veterinary care and to reach those areas in Marion County where statistics show there to be an overpopulation/"stray" problem.
- The City produce promotional campaigns, public service announcements and special events that educate the community at-large about the benefits of spay/neuter, such as health benefits, preventing unwanted litters and improved behavior of neutered animals. These messages/announcements must be constantly repeated.
- The City and ACC promote the adoption of animals through public service announcements, free advertising and special events.

^{16/} *The typical unwanted dog is acquired free, either from a friend or neighbor or is born at home.*

^{17/} *Only one-third of all dogs and cats remain in their original household for their entire life. Rowan, William J., "The Success of Companion Animal Management Programs." A Review—Anthrozoos 199X; Vol. 1, No. 2:110.*

^{18/} *The Marin County, California Humane Society, for example, requires adoptive owners to meet with an adoption counselor and attend an education session before even completing the adoption paperwork. This is a clear illustration of an "adoption program," as opposed to an "adoption process."*

- The City and ACC work to educate and change the behavior of irresponsible pet owners. *The animals are not to blame; unfortunately they are the ones who are punished.*
- The City and ACC produce an educational brochure/video on animal ownership and care and have adoptive owners watch the video before adopting an animal.
- ACC and the City should work on development of a humane animal care curriculum that can be utilized by local educators.
- ACC and the City should design adult and community education programs to assist those who need help with animal care skills. Consider providing this training at no fee for all to attend and seek out corporate sponsorship for such classes.
- The City should produce a promotional video for Animal Care and Control that provides basic information, such as services, goals and location.
- ACC should offer behavioral courses that deal with such topics as chewing, barking, digging, house training, etc.

VII. DATA COLLECTION

Data collection and retention at ACC clearly is inadequate and unreliable. For calendar year 2001, ACC cannot account for 1,000 to 1,200 animals. Data collection and retention is critical because, (1) it allows the information gathered to be used to analyze and determine where preventative programming should be directed, (2) it serves as an "accountability barometer," and (3) it allows for the opportunity to track the status and welfare of animals at the facility."^{19/}

The Task Force recommends that:

- ACC must keep detailed records that set forth the specific reason(s) an animal is euthanized.

^{19/}

ACC's computer system is set up only to handle complaints. ACC does not possess computer software capable of tracking animals received at the shelter and the status of those animals. In Las Vegas, for example, the animal care organization responsible for animal care operations for the city, utilizes an electronic scanner to track the status of each animal who enters the shelter. The Las Vegas shelter, therefore, has no issues of missing and/or lost animals.

- ACC must keep detailed records of the medical condition of each animal at the facility including medical care given, provider of the medical care, medications given, date(s) of the care and notations on recommended follow-up.
- ACC must keep detailed records of where it retrieves animals, including zip code, the breed retrieved, identifying characteristics of the animal, whether the animal appears to be spayed/neutered, and whether the animal was "owner-surrendered" or a "stray." This information will help target those areas in Marion County with significant "stray" populations or significant "owner-surrenders." Appropriate education or other programs can then be directed to these areas.
- ACC computerize records, including the now handwritten "cage" cards to improve accountability.

VIII. LICENSING AND LICENSING FEES

The Task Force believes the City must require that all animals in Marion County be licensed.^{20/} The reason is twofold. First, licensing will facilitate the return of lost animals, which in turn will lessen the euthanasia rate. Second, revenue from licensing fees must be designated for ACC or for other City-sponsored programs that deal with animal care and control and pet overpopulation.^{21/} The City would designate appropriate outlets for license purchases. Other cities that have instituted license fees have increased compliance by publishing applications in local newspapers, publishing names of delinquent dog owners, recruiting volunteers for door-to-door canvassing, mail distribution of licenses, offering license forms at special events where low cost or free rabies vaccinations are offered, and levying fines on owners for unlicensed pets.

In New Hampshire, for example, the State legislature passed a law requiring that all companion animals be licensed. Enforcement was fairly simple. When the animal received its rabies shot, the veterinarian sent information about the pet and its owner to the local licensing authority. The licensing authority would check its

^{20/} *The company Pet Data Systems specializes in computerized licensing of companion animals for municipalities.*

^{21/} *The successes experienced by other communities that have instituted mandatory companion animal licensure can be seen by examining Seattle Washington's (King County), 2001 "Annual Report on Pet License and Shelter Statistics" provided as **Attachment H** to the Report. Seattle's companion animal licensing fee is administered under the auspices of its Licensing and Regulatory Services Division.*

computer database to see if the pet had been licensed. If not, the licensing authority sent a letter to the owner indicating that he had failed to license the pet and must do so within a certain number of days. The licensure compliance rate in New Hampshire is extremely high.

The Task Force recommends:

- Instituting a licensing procedure for companion animals. The suggested cost for the license would be \$15, with a nominal fee for each additional animal. The license would include appropriate owner identification and should accentuate the importance of visual identification of the animal. This facilitates returning an animal to its home without the animal entering a shelter.^{22/}
- Implementing a differential licensing fee for animals who are spayed/neutered.
- The City and ACC promote microchipping in conjunction with offering reduced license rates.^{23/}
- Using computers for "quick searches" according to characteristics of the lost animal to facilitate over-the-telephone identification.
- Consider development of computer networks to link the records of all area animal shelters into one database for easy access by the public, veterinary hospitals and pet stores.

IX. ORDINANCES

- *Dog Fighting/Animal Cruelty* — There are dog fighting rings in various communities in Indianapolis. These rings make dogs fight for points or fight to the death. Such an activity is not only barbaric, but unacceptable and should be — if not already — made illegal in Indianapolis with severe fines or incarceration imposed on those who participate in this act. Currently, only one employee of Animal Care and Control investigates,

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In Austin, Texas, animal control officers in the field carry laptop computers, which allow them to identify a lost animal that has a numbered identification medallion issued by the City of Austin. Once the animal is identified, the officer returns the animal directly to the owner's home at no charge.

^{23/}

In Great Britain, pet owners are given free microchips for their pets. Great Britain has experienced a twenty percent return-to-owner rate of animals to their owners.

reports and attempts to stop these inhumane activities. The City legal division should draft an ordinance to outlaw dog fighting. Penalties for those found guilty of sponsoring, participating in or providing animals for dog fighting should be severe.

- *Companion Animal* — The Task Force's recommendations regarding specific ordinances are contained in other sections of the Report. Since language in some of the current ordinances appears to be ambiguous, the Task Force recommends that a group be appointed to examine and recommend appropriate changes to companion animal ordinances. This group could include an ACC representative, City legal staff, attorneys and representatives of animal care groups.
- *Spay/Neuter of Adopted Animals* — The Task Force believes that the City should strongly consider adoption of an ordinance requiring that all animals adopted from ACC be spayed/neutered before placement into a new home.

X. INDIANAPOLIS ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL OPERATIONS

A. STAFFING

The Task Force believes the current structure of Animal Care and Control, including staffing, is not adequate to effect the change necessary for improvements in animal care and control.^{24/}

1. ADMINISTRATOR

The Administrator of ACC should be a visible leader and the central "cog" in orchestrating the necessary changes needed to effectuate the degree of compassion, accountability, efficiency, and quantitative and qualitative standards by which ACC must be run. Furthermore, the Administrator must play a critical role in the administration of proper veterinary care, increased adoptions, decreased euthanasia, community involvement, education and collaboration. At a minimum, the following are requirements and characteristics that must be possessed by the ACC Administrator:

- Be animal friendly and have animal care and operations experience/background.

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*Complete job descriptions for the positions of Administrator, Operations Manager, Shelter Manager and Front Office Manager from the successful animal control facility in Fort Wayne are found at **Attachment I** to the Report.*

- Be visible in the community in animal welfare issues.
- Have good interpersonal, leadership and management skills.
- Be team oriented and a good problem-solver.
- Be an effective and positive leader in managing ACC and staff.
- Identify and resolve issues.
- Have and/or develop a vision, plan, or goals consistent with the mission statement of the Animal Care and Control Division.
- Develop or assist in the development of a plan to address and/or resolve problems associated with pet overpopulation.
- Develop or assist in the development of a plan to educate the community about pet overpopulation and the need for responsible pet ownership.
- Develop or assist in the development of *an adoption program* – not simply an "*adoption process*" to increase the quantity and quality of adoptions.
- Encourage alliances and work with other shelters, breed rescue organizations, veterinarians and animal-related groups to increase adoptions and decrease euthanasia.
- Develop or assist in the development of a program to reach out to the corporate community to support (financial and otherwise) the goals and mission of the Animal Care and Control Division.
- Develop innovative means to maximize the facility and its operations with available resources.
- Assist in the development of a volunteer program that helps accomplish the mission statement of the Animal Care and Control Division.
- Develop an accountability plan for adoptions, to reduce current euthanasia rates and to assure appropriate and qualitative veterinary care.

- Possess public relations skills to interact with the community at all levels.
- Maintain a good working relationship with the Animal Care and Control Board.
- In conjunction with the Shelter and Operations Managers, move toward computerization of animal records.
- Prevent the physical abuse of animals at ACC.

In 2000, the National Animal Control Association conducted a survey of average salaries for animal control administrators. The average salary range for animal care administrators for the year 1998 was \$45,000 to \$65,000. The Task Force recommends that the salary for the ACC Administrator be increased from \$37,000 to a range of \$60,000 to \$75,000. This salary range reflects the level of responsibility required of the individual needed to lead the operation and would attract top quality individuals who are knowledgeable about animal care, welfare and control issues. The Administrator must devote significant time to identify, analyze, organize and resolve the significant issues at ACC.

2. OPERATIONS MANAGER

The Operations Manager at ACC should:

- Have experience in handling animals and in supervising others, *i.e.*, animal enforcement officers.
- Have at least an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice.
- Have practical knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques of law enforcement or similar investigative field.
- Be trained in euthanasia procedures.
- Respond to escalated or in-depth law enforcement problems related to companion animal issues and answer citizen inquiries as necessary.
- Successfully process advanced or complex investigations and compile evidence and documentation for court cases.
- Monitor and process animal control violators.

- Have the ability to act as supervisor of other shelter staff if and when other supervisors are absent.
- Prevent the abuse of animals at ACC.

3. SHELTER MANAGER

The Shelter Manager plays a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the kennel. That person determines what animals are euthanized, the criteria for euthanization, the criteria for adoption, the quantity and quality of veterinary care received by the animals, and the sanitary conditions within which the animals live. That individual must have an excellent day-to-day working relationship with the Administrator and all shelter staff. The Shelter Manager and Administrator must meet frequently to discuss and resolve issues in the kennel and be proactive in avoiding those things that could adversely affect the care of animals at ACC. This person must be dedicated to animal care and welfare and should possess a "long-range" view in making ACC a first-class facility.

The Shelter Manager must work with the Administrator to establish relationships with breed rescue groups, other animal shelters and/or individuals whose goal it is to increase adoptions and decrease euthanasia. The Shelter Manager also must be involved in maintaining an effective volunteer program. The Shelter Manager should:

- Manage all daily aspects of the shelter, including animal care and staffing needs.
- Exhibit excellent interpersonal and supervisory skills.
- Have expertise in the handling and care of animals.
- Identify ways to improve retention of kennel staff.
- Identify problems in the kennel and discuss solutions with the ACC Administrator and other staff.
- Be properly trained in the operational needs of running a shelter.
- Help establish guidelines for veterinary care and ensure that those guidelines are being met.
- Assist in the development of a volunteer program that will enable the animals, among other things, to be bathed, groomed, and exercised.

- Assist in the development of criteria and standards for adoption and euthanasia.
- Foster better relationships with other shelters and breed rescue groups so as to decrease euthanasia rates and increase adoption rates.
- Prevent the physical abuse of animals at ACC.
- Assist in the development of criteria and standards for kennel sanitation.
- Be responsible for inventory and maintenance of all kennel supplies.
- In conjunction with the Administrator and Operations Manager, move toward computerization of all animal records.

4. FRONT OFFICE MANAGER

The Front Office Manager should possess good interpersonal skills to assist the public. It is important that this individual be friendly, customer service oriented, and helpful, as well as being well informed about the ACC facility, policies and procedures.

This person also should be a problem-solver and possess computer and supervisory skills.

5. VOLUNTEER/PUBLIC RELATIONS PERSON/COMMUNITY OUTREACH COORDINATOR

The Task Force recommends that the ACC Administrator be assisted in developing programs to create and sustain a volunteer base at ACC by a full-time paid Volunteer/Public Relations/Community Outreach Coordinator. Responsibilities would include:

- Develop and nurture the ACC volunteer program.
- Develop and coordinate a volunteer base. Oversee training of volunteers.
- Improve the ACC facility's image and promote the facility (which includes advertising to the public).
- Raise funds for ACC and either possess or develop access to individuals with grant-writing skills.

- Improve ACC's external relationships, e.g., improve ACC's relationships with other shelters and breed rescue organizations.
- Establish, foster and maintain good relationships with veterinarians as well as low cost spay/neuter clinics.
- Establish relationships with the corporate community and explore opportunities for support and/or sponsorship.
- Organize and maintain a speaker's bureau.
- Develop and maintain relationships with appropriate City divisions and neighborhood organizations and bring humane education and other activities to schools, community organizations, and other identified groups.

Establishing good relationships with the volunteer community, other shelters, breed rescue organizations, and corporate community are essential for ACC to prosper. The Task Force learned through public hearings that there are many people who want to volunteer their time and assist ACC. As illustrated in public comment, these potential volunteers have not been cultivated or given any incentive to volunteer. Recently, individuals have offered their services free of charge to create an adoption website, and they have donated money for fencing and bedding for the animals at ACC. The Task Force strongly recommends that ACC immediately begin to embrace and cultivate these relationships to positively assist ACC.

XI. CONTRACT BETWEEN HUMANE SOCIETY OF INDIANAPOLIS AND ANIMAL CONTROL

The contract between the City and Humane Society has resulted in some changes at ACC. Among improvements:

- The physical facility of ACC is cleaner.
- A network of area veterinarians is to provide emergency services to animals picked up in the field at a discounted rate (\$35).
- A program has recently been initiated to ensure that animals adopted from ACC are spayed/neutered before going home to a new owner.
- More literature, including brochures about a variety of subjects related to responsible pet care and resources are available to the general public.
- HSI donates discount spay/neuter certificates valued at \$40 to ACC.

While acknowledging some of the changes noted above, the Task Force does not believe the contract has resulted in an appropriate focus in certain critical areas. These areas include increasing adoption rates, decreasing euthanasia rates, improving the quantity and quality of veterinary care, volunteer and education programs, and data collection and retention.

The Task Force recommends that the Humane Society contract with the City be extended; however, within a year of the execution of the contract, the City must develop and implement a credible and qualitative plan to transition the functions performed by the Humane Society back to Animal Care and Control. Prior to any extension of the contract, the parties must first clearly define and delineate their respective areas of responsibility and specifically set forth measurable performance goals and accountability standards.^{25/}

In anticipation of the ultimate transition of animal care and control responsibilities back to ACC, ACC must specifically define and expand the qualifications required of an Administrator. The Administrator must be knowledgeable in the area of animal care and control. The individual's career discipline and career path must be focused on animal care issues. The individual must be given measurable goals for improving animal care at ACC and be evaluated based on accomplishment of those goals.

XII. SEPARATING ANIMAL CARE FUNCTION FROM ANIMAL CONTROL FUNCTION

The City must consider separating the distinct functions of animal care and animal control/field services into separate and distinct entities. Of the \$2 million budget for Animal Care and Control, little if any of that money is dedicated to proactive programs that reduce the likelihood of an animal entering the shelter and subsequently being euthanized. The fundamental premise for animal control is to protect people from animals, *i.e.*, to prevent animals from biting citizens, disease control, responding to complaints. This is very distinct from the animal care and welfare function which entails protecting animals from people and "re-homing" animals.

The animal control function, which includes impounding animals and enforcing ordinances and laws, is properly placed and should remain under the direction of the City's Department of Public Safety. Once, however, an animal enters a

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Animal Care and Control and the Humane Society must develop a formal strategic and operating plan that provides action steps, designates persons responsible, creates time lines and monitors results. Scheduled progress reviews of the Humane Society's performance and contract compliance must be conducted quarterly.

shelter, the animal care and welfare function begins. In that regard, there needs to be in place a professional organization or person knowledgeable in the area to oversee that vital function whose career discipline is focused on animal care issues.

The Task Force recommends that the City immediately begin to study the benefits of animal care being operated under a private, non-profit humane organization. This organization would function independently from animal control and the Department of Public Safety. This is a central change necessary to foster the improvement of animal care at the City's facility, including increasing adoptions, decreasing the significantly high percentage of shelter animals euthanized, advancing public education on responsibilities of companion animal ownership, and providing helpful instruction on animal care and training. Use of a private, non-profit humane organization — which has been successfully done in other cities — would significantly strengthen efforts to develop an effective volunteer organization and enhance the ability to raise funds from the private sector to support programs for the betterment of animal welfare. This arrangement would reduce fiscal demands on the City, which could then foster a progressive long-term plan to improve animal welfare in the community and to implement other programs recommended in this Report.

Existing non-profit groups or new organizations formed for the purpose of providing the service for the City could bid to provide the animal care function to the City. Alternatively, a non-profit organization could be formed with a board of directors designated with the responsibility for hiring staff to provide animal care services.

XIII. FUNDING/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The pet overpopulation problem in the City has developed and festered for many years. The problem will not disappear overnight, and the City, corporate and non-profit communities and public should be resolved to devote adequate dollars to address the problem. The programs and recommendations made by the Task Force clearly will require funding and funding sources. The Task Force recommends that a variety of funding sources be developed and pooled to create a City spay/neuter fund. Among possible sources are:

- City/County government
- Licensing fees
- Non-profit animal organizations
- Public donations
- Corporate community
- Endowments

Requiring pet owners to license their animals offers tremendous potential to raise revenue for animal care and control and proactive animal care in the City. A clear example can be found in the city of San Mateo, California. San Mateo required licensure of all animals, and reached a fifty percent compliance rate, which resulted in significant revenue to the City. This effort also increased the return-to-owner rate of lost animals to fifty percent. That meant that mandatory licensing not only raised revenue but also prevented significant numbers of animals from entering the shelter because appropriate identification helped reunite lost pets with owners.

There are approximately 360,000 owned dogs and cats in Marion County. If, for example, owners were charged \$15 per license (with a nominal fee for each additional animal owned) and if Marion County set and obtained a goal of a fifty percent compliance rate, \$2.7 million in revenue could be generated.

The City, public, corporate and non-profit community must raise funds to fund aggressive programs for animal care. In Greensboro, North Carolina, for example, the Chamber of Commerce created a Corporate Community Task Force to raise funds from the corporate community to assist with overpopulation issues. Corporations were asked to and did make contributions.

In New Jersey, the State created a spay/neuter fund. A portion of a companion animal licensing fee went into the fund. It was then used by veterinarians to perform spay/neuters at a rate of eighty percent of their normal fee.

Finally, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit auxiliary to ACC could be created to raise funds, with proceeds distributed to progressive programs that provide animal care and control services.

XIV. PROGRAMS IN OTHER CITIES

Many cities progressively and aggressively address pet overpopulation. Among successful programs are:

Marin County, California (Northern California) – The animal care and control facility is run by the Humane Society of Marin County. There is a spay/neuter clinic associated with the shelter that offers low cost spay/neuter. There is no pet overpopulation problem in this community. The euthanasia rate is low, and the owner surrender rate is low. Microchips are provided to the public, and prospective owners are required to meet with an adoption counselor and attend an education class *prior* to adopting an animal.^{26/}

^{26/}

*Copies of materials from the Marin County Humane Society are attached to the Report as **Attachment J**.*

San Francisco – San Francisco is known as a model for “best practices.” There is a very close working relationship between the Humane Society and Animal Care and Control. When animals are brought to the Humane Society, they are sent to Animal Care and Control as an entry point. Specific information is taken about the animals and they are then taken to the San Francisco SPCA (which is located one block from Animal Care and Control) where they are adopted. Animals with injuries are also rehabilitated at the SPCA.^{27/}

City government in San Francisco funded Animal Care and Control at \$4 per capita. The San Francisco SPCA was able to raise funds from the corporate and private sector. The combined spending for animal care and control for the City of San Francisco and the San Francisco SPCA is \$20 per capita. The combined resources of the City and the San Francisco SPCA have resulted in a \$15 million fund/budget for animal care and control.

San Francisco also offers owners of certain breeds of dogs (Rottweilers, Pitbulls, etc.) money as an incentive to have the animal spayed/neutered. The owner is offered \$10.00 and free spay/neuter services.

Phoenix – Phoenix has developed a satellite adoption facility that has increased adoption rates. Non-profit groups have raised money for the Phoenix shelter, and animals are spayed prior to leaving the shelter. Phoenix reduced its euthanasia rate from 18.5 animals euthanized per 1,000 human population in 1992 to 11.7 per 1,000 in 2000.

Boston – Boston currently has no pet overpopulation problem. Boston has been successful in educating the public about responsible pet ownership. The City has one of the most active animal welfare groups (the Massachusetts SPCA) in the country and has been very proactive in animal care issues. Moreover, Boston’s Animal Rescue League — a private \$100 million non-profit organization — assists in helping reduce pet overpopulation.^{28/} The City also has an animal wellness hospital.

Seattle – Seattle (and King County, Washington) has a spay/neuter clinic and a humane society that employs three veterinarians. Seattle provides incentives to its citizens to spay/neuter their pets and has a progressive licensing program.

Orlando – Orlando has a city-sponsored spay/neuter clinic.

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*A videotape about the San Francisco SPCA and videotape of a news documentary done on the San Francisco SPCA is included in this Report as **Attachment K**.*

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Donations to Boston’s Animal Rescue League come from corporations and individuals.

XV. CONCLUSION

The Task Force acknowledges that the City of Indianapolis has an animal overpopulation problem. We must tackle the problem one step at a time. We must be proactive and educate our community, rally our leadership within and outside the animal community, incorporate proven methods used by other cities, and set about the tasks of spay/neuter, reducing euthanasia, increasing adoptions and providing quality veterinary care.

Humans profit immensely from their association with animals. Our companion animals, however, have not benefited as well. The ways in which man has betrayed these creatures are numerous. When the bond of mutual attachment fails, it is very threatening to a pet. Their genetic programming does not allow for abandonment. *Animals in shelters have not asked to be there. Once there, they have no control over their fate.*

Dogs and cats are our loyal companions and they deserve our loyalty in return.

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